

Claims

- 1        1.        A method for shipping material, comprising:  
2                submitting a shipment request, said request containing shipment information;  
3                generating domestic and international control characteristics;  
4                accessing a delegation database to determine ownership of said control  
5                characteristics;  
6                automatically forwarding said control characteristics to control points;  
7                automatically notifying processing parties of approvals;  
8                automatically providing processing parties with documentation; and  
9                storing in a database information for tracking said shipping material and auditing  
10              said method.
- 1        2.        The method of claim 1 wherein said shipment information further includes  
2                international shipment information.
- 1        3.        The method of claim 1 wherein said step of submitting said shipment request  
2                further comprises electronically providing fields for a requester to input shipping  
3                information.
- 1        4.        The method of claim 3 wherein said input shipping information further  
2                comprises a company identifier for said requester, a company identifier for a  
3                recipient, and information for fields provided for the attention of other reviewers.
- 1        5.        The method of claim 1 further comprising notifying requirements for export  
2                controls, finance controls, hazardous material controls, sensitive material controls,  
3                traffic controls, hand-carry authorizations, and security controls.

1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of automatically notifying processing  
2 parties of approvals includes providing electronic mail to a plurality of persons  
3 authorized to approve specific portions of said request.

1 7. The method of claim 1 comprising implementing said method through  
2 application software that provides for limited programmability.

1 8. The method of claim 7 wherein said applications software comprises Lotus  
2 Notes Application Technology.

1 9. The method of claim 7 wherein said applications software comprises a high  
2 level program language.

1 10. A method for electronically acquiring request and authorization information  
2 and documentation for the shipping of material, comprising:

3 providing an electronic database adapted to receive a shipping instruction from a  
4 requester;

5 verifying said requester;

6 providing fields in said electronic database for approvals of said shipping  
7 instruction;

8 notifying said requester's approving manager or approving manager designee of  
9 said request for an initial approval;

10 providing for a document link within said electronic database to view said request;

11 prompting said approving manager or said approving manager designee to assign a  
12 status for said request;

13 notifying next required approving manager or next required approving manager  
14 designee after said initial approval;

15 prompting said requester to prepare documents for moving goods and materials to  
16 a designated shipping location;

17 notifying said requester continuously via electronic mail of the status of said  
 18 request;  
 19 notifying said requester of approved request after all approvals have been granted;  
 20 generating shipping documentation at said requester's initiation; and  
 21 storing in a database information for tracking said shipment material and auditing  
 22 said method.

1 11. The method of claim 10 wherein verifying said requester comprises matching  
 2 identification of said requester to an allowed or denied requester database.

1 12. The method of claim 10 wherein notifying said requester's approving manager  
 2 or approving manager designee of said request for an initial approval comprises  
 3 notifying via electronic mail.

1 13. The method of claim 10 further comprising copying said approving manager if  
 2 said designee gives approval.

1 14. The method of claim 10 wherein notifying said requester's approving manager  
 2 or approving manager designee of said request for an initial approval further  
 3 comprises verifying said approving manager or said approving manager designee.

1 15. The method of claim 14 wherein verifying said approving manager or said  
 2 approving manager designee comprises notifying by electronic mail.

1 16. The method of claim 10 wherein providing for a document link within said  
 2 electronic database to view said request further provides for viewing all contents of  
 3 said request in its entirety.

1 17. The method of claim 10 wherein providing for a document link within said  
2 electronic database to view said request further provides for adapting said request to  
3 allow said approving manager or said approving manager designee to edit said  
4 request.

1 18. The method of claim 17 wherein said step of allowing said approving manager  
2 or said approving manager designee to edit said request includes providing for an edit  
3 softkey for said manager to elect.

1 19. The method of claim 10 wherein said step of prompting said approving  
2 manager or said approving manager designee to assign a status for said request further  
3 includes canceling said request in its entirety when said request is denied.

1 20. The method of claim 19 wherein said step of prompting said approving  
2 manager or said approving manager designee to assign a status for said request further  
3 includes prompting said approving manager or said designee to electronically save  
4 said request.

1 21. The method of claim 10 wherein said step of notifying the next required  
2 approving manager or next required approving manager designee after said initial  
3 approval includes notifying via electronic mail.

1 22. The method of claim 10 wherein said step of prompting said requester to  
2 prepare documents for moving goods and materials to a designated shipping location  
3 further includes automatically preparing move/ship ticket documents.

1 23. The method of claim 10 further comprising notifying a sensitive material  
2 coordinator if precious metals are involved in said shipment, said notification  
3 performed via electronic mail.

1 24. The method of claim 10 further comprising notifying a hazardous material  
 2 coordinator if hazardous materials are involved in said shipment, said notification  
 3 performed via electronic mail.

1 25. The method of claim 24 wherein said hazardous material coordinator is  
 2 prompted to assign a status through said document link and edit functions.

1 26. The method of claim 10 wherein after any editing is performed to said request,  
 2 notification to save said request electronically delivered.

1 27. The method of claim 10 further comprising notifying said requester after said  
 2 request has been denied.

1 28. The method of claim 28 including automatically canceling said request  
 2 immediately upon receiving a disapproval.

1 29. A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program  
 2 of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for shipping  
 3 material, said method steps comprising:

4 submitting a shipment request, said request containing shipment information;  
 5 generating domestic and international control characteristics;  
 6 accessing a delegation database to determine ownership of said control  
 7 characteristics;  
 8 automatically forwarding said control characteristics to control points;  
 9 automatically notifying processing parties of approvals;  
 10 automatically providing processing parties with documentation; and  
 11 storing in a database information for tracking said shipping material and auditing  
 12 said method.

1 30. A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program  
 2 of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for shipping  
 3 material, said method steps comprising:  
 4 providing an electronic database adapted to receive a shipping instruction from a  
 5 requester;  
 6 verifying said requester;  
 7 providing fields in said electronic database for approvals of said shipping  
 8 instruction;  
 9 notifying said requester's approving manager or approving manager designee of  
 10 said request for an initial approval;  
 11 providing for a document link within said electronic database to view said request;  
 12 prompting said approving manager or said approving manager designee to assign a  
 13 status for said request;  
 14 notifying next required approving manager or next required approving manager  
 15 designee after said initial approval;  
 16 prompting said requester to prepare documents for moving goods and materials to  
 17 a designated shipping location;  
 18 notifying said requester continuously via electronic mail of the status of said  
 19 request;  
 20 notifying said requester of approved request after all approvals have been granted;  
 21 generating shipping documentation at said requester's initiation; and  
 22 storing in a database information for tracking said shipment material and auditing  
 23 said method.

1 31. A system for coordinating and approving shipping information for the shipment  
 2 of goods and materials, said system comprising:  
 3 a server having central computer processing capabilities, adapted to perform the  
 4 following functions:

5 generating domestic and international control characteristics;  
6 accessing a delegation database to determine ownership of said control  
7 characteristics;  
8 automatically forwarding said control characteristics to control points;  
9 automatically notifying processing parties of approvals;  
10 automatically providing processing parties with documentation; and  
11 storing in a database information for tracking said shipment and auditing said  
12 method; and  
13 a plurality of interactive input/output sites attached to said server for inputting and  
14 reviewing shipment requests.

1 32. A system for coordinating and approving shipping requests for the shipment of  
2 goods and materials, said system comprising:  
3 a server having central computer processing capabilities, adapted to perform the  
4 following functions:  
5 providing an electronic database adapted to receive a shipping instruction from  
6 a requester;  
7 verifying said requester;  
8 providing fields in said electronic database for approvals of said shipping  
9 instruction;  
10 notifying said requester's approving manager or approving manager designee  
11 of said request for an initial approval;  
12 providing for a document link within said electronic database to view said  
13 request;  
14 prompting said approving manager or said approving manager designee to  
15 assign a status for said request;  
16 notifying next required approving manager or next required approving manager  
17 designee after said initial approval;

18           prompting said requester to prepare documents for moving goods and materials  
19           to a designated shipping location;  
20           notifying said requester continuously via electronic mail of the status of said  
21           request;  
22           notifying said requester of approved request after all approvals have been  
23           granted;  
24           generating shipping documentation at said requester's initiation; and  
25           storing in a database information for tracking said shipment and auditing said  
26           method; and  
27           a plurality of interactive input/output sites attached to said server for inputting and  
28           reviewing said shipment instruction.

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